

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Gene Herman
609-777-2600

RELEASE: April 28, 1998

GOVERNOR ADDRESS ANTI-DRUG RALLY; STRESSES DANGERS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Gov. Christie Whitman today addressed middle school students at an anti-drug rally in Trenton, stressing that substance abuse can keep young persons from reaching their full potential.

"Inside of each young person is the potential to do marvelous things," Gov. Whitman said. "Also inside are clean lungs, healthy livers, and good brains. To do their best, young people will need strong bodies and minds. It's their responsibility to take care of them."

"Cigarettes, drugs and alcohol may keep you from getting the grades you need to go to the college of your choice," Gov. Whitman warned the students. "They may destroy your health and keep you from enjoying your favorite sport. They may even kill you."

The Governor spoke at a rally which launched a new anti- drug initiative, "Talk Now New Jersey." Coordinated by the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the initiative is part of a state-wide effort to address the importance of parents talking to their children about drug abuse.

"All the research shows that when parents talk to their children, they're less likely to get mixed up in drugs and alcohol. Parents should always talk honestly with kids about drugs. Be there to listen. And stay alert for signs that a child they know might need help."

As part of her overall commitment to combating substance abuse and related crimes, the Governor has signed a variety of anti-drug laws. These include laws providing for stiffer penalties for large-scale distributors of marijuana and methamphetamines; cracking down on dealers who use firearms and set deadly booby traps for the police, and keeping dealers and buyers from returning to neighborhoods where they sold or bought drugs.

At the Governor's direction, the Attorney General's office is working with local, county and state law enforcement to eradicate open-air drug markets and turn dealers away from community streets. A bill that designates the hallucinogenic drug, Special K, as a controlled substance and enhances the penalty for using drugs in sexual assault cases was also signed by the Governor.

Gov. Whitman has also stressed the importance of prevention and education. Education Commissioner Leo Klagholz is working with schools throughout the state to strengthen efforts to keep drugs out of schools and teach students the deadly dangers of substance abuse. At the Governor's direction, the drug education section of the Core Curriculum education standards was fast tracked to ensure that it was implemented in schools throughout the state last September.

